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bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Compared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen cultivate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect: gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

The former affranchis fully intended to keep
38 their lands THE HAITIAN PEOPLE once the
175 French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw
423 the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete mo-
425 nopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following
●471 independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

175 Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a
421 general verification of property titles. This would have been a deli-
[693] cate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres*
175 *nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"
425 The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or
556 black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

[642] 5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people
[648] in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

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114 642 175 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

[471] In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

175 642 566 631 421 625 692 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares*. Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomets[14] were stationed in every cantonment or pariah, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *maréchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

13. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed seneschal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

[671] 16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Barskett (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

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of one quarter of the crop was abolished.[23] This tax worked moderately well on great plantations with hundreds of workers and a large annual budget, but it bore heavily, sometimes unfairly, on smaller farms. To give up the government's fourth meant a tremendous drop in state revenues, but this was to be compensated by a new tax of ten *gourdes* (a gourde was then worth about five cents) on every thousand pounds of coffee sold in the country, and by an export tax on coffee. A man might raise sugar or make syrup, tafia (raw rum), and distilled rum, without paying any tax at all. Coffee culture required little careful cultivation, while sugar required a great deal; removing the tax from sugar would, it was hoped, encourage the cultivation of cane. The President was putting into practice the then novel idea of Adam Smith that the more freedom an enterpriser is allowed, the more he will produce, so that by pursuing his own self-interest he unintentionally benefits the state. To know definitely what taxes will be imposed, reasoned Pétion, is more of an inducement to a landlord than to face the double fluctuation of crop prices and the state's quarter. Small proprietors and sugar planters were now, like the larger landholders, attracted to Pétion's régime.

His final boon to proprietors, and one which Adam Smith would not have approved, was that of governmental subsidies in bad years. When prices of coffee and sugar were low, the state bought large quantities of these crops for the purpose of raising their price. The result was to increase the debt and to make the people feel that the state was responsible for individual economic success, rather than their own efforts.

These first concessions were all made to the important people of the South—to the mulattoes, families of the old régime, persons who desired economic prominence in order to bolster social position. The small folk of the Republic came next. The President recommended to the Senate the abolition of the law dating back to Toussaint's time which prohibited the holding of plantations of less than a minimum acreage. The Senate accordingly[24] reduced the minimum holding to thirty acres.[25] Actually this legislation did not bring

23. By a law of March 9, 1807. This tax was instituted by Toussaint and continued in effect by Dessalines and Christophe.

24. On April 21, 1807.

25. Or ten carreaux. Toussaint's law had allowed properties of fifty acres only in cases of exceptional fertility of land. See Note 18.

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175 about any radical change, for few of the common people could find
423 money to pay for thirty acres, while the well-to-do all wanted more.

[433] Every concession desired by the landed proprietors had now been granted—with the result that economic prosperity was showing a steady decline. It was only when this fact was abundantly apparent that Pétion took the step for which he has since been so famously praised and so roundly criticized. By permission of the Senate, in a law of December 30, 1809, he began to give away state lands: fifteen acres of cultivable soil to every soldier in the army, to be held in perpetuity, with proportionately larger grants to higher officers.

Opposition immediately arose to this measure, and from expected quarters. The owners of great estates protested that if soldiers had farms, other people would soon want (and receive) them, leaving no workers on the large plantations. Social climbers protested, for when practically anyone can own land there is no particular social distinction in having it. Pétion's minister, Bonnet, opposed the permanent alienation of the chief financial resource of the state, proposing instead the grant of long-term loans to soldiers for the purchase of land. Pétion was not insensible to the logic of some of these objections; he said, however, that a nation which relied upon the willing labor of masses of its citizens was ultimately stronger than one which depended upon forced labor of any kind. As for the socially aspiring, he could ignore their arguments since they were not publicly and openly expressed. To his minister he pointed out that loans, if made, would in all probability never be repaid, so that one might as well face the reality at once and give people the land.

All through the next decade Pétion made new and democratic divisions of the land. Able generals were given large tracts, partly as wages, partly as a stimulus to productive agriculture on their part. By another enactment, military invalids were rewarded with land. Eventually most of the rest of the public domain was either put on sale at such moderate price that thousands of humble Haitians might purchase their bit, or was effectively occupied by people who "squatted" far up in the hills, out of official view.

175 The democratization of land led to new adjustments in the eco-
● 471 nomic system. People who owned small farms would obviously not
24 continue to raise sugar and coffee, but rather turn to food crops for immediate family consumption. Only the large plantations could carry on the cultivation of money crops. These in turn, no longer able

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to command the forced labor of serfs, had to develop a new technique for securing manual labor. Legislation soon recognized the new state of affairs by enactments which kept distinct *la grande culture* and *la petite culture*. The former had to do with the production of sugar and coffee, from which the republic derived its wealth; the latter with small farming. *La petite culture* was simple cultivation of whatever the small owner wished to raise. Large-scale culture, on the other hand, became rather complicated.

Owners of great estates had to guide them only their experience of slave days and of serfdom under Toussaint and Dessalines. Now that both were gone, few planters were wealthy enough to pay wages for day labor; a new variation was needed. It was forthcoming in the *métayer* system—a crop-sharing arrangement with tenants closely resembling that which prevails today in some parts of the United States. The owner leased his estate in large or small plots to tenants. Half the income went to the landlord and half to the tenant; but the landlord must furnish the sugar mill and other necessary machinery where cane was raised. Laws were passed to give a measure of security to the proprietor. The contract between him and the tenant (*fermier*)[26] must be signed before a civil official; the engagement must extend through the harvesting of one crop; tenants even then might not abandon their contracts except after notice of three months, with a declaration to the local official.

Punishments were stipulated for the breaking of contracts. A tenant who had made an agreement and then abandoned the *habitation*, even for a visit elsewhere, without a certificate attesting his regularity, might be imprisoned for eight days the first time, a month the second, and three months the third, such imprisonment to be spent in hard labor on public works. Any disputes arising between plantation owners and tenants were to be taken before the local justice. If they threatened to develop into serious cases, the justice was to notify the commandant of the nearest important town. A person who fomented disturbance of such agreements (the Haitian equivalent of "labor agitators," style 1810) might be imprisoned for a year, as also his accomplices. Commandants of each arrondissement must put down disorder as soon as requested by landlords, tenant farmers, or overseers. They must likewise make frequent patrols of

26. The word "fermier" must not be translated simply as "farmer"; the idea of a contract and a rental fee is implicit in the French word.

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to spend one's time in the allotted garden patch than to cultivate sugar cane steadily in the heat of the day. In a garden there was more variety to the work, and more independent decision; in a cane field all must work in unison to be effective. Moreover, the yield from the garden was a daily thing, while that of the cane fields came but once a year. Less and less were the overseers able to get the tenants away from their gardens and into the fields.

Not all the sabotage came from the common folk. Landowners had their normal share of profit motive. The complex system of social security and benevolent stewardship ate away much of the income of the estate.[29] More important, the owners had had no experience of plantation management other than by directing forced labor. Corporal punishment was now abolished, but to the owner it was still unthinkable that there should be no coercion in plantation work. The laws protecting labor therefore left them bewildered, and they did not hold up their part of the system. Finding it expensive to maintain sugar machinery, impossible to engage docile workers, and necessary to finance social security, most of the "aristocrats" simply took the easier path of leasing their estates in small subdivisions, getting out of them what they could.

Another unexpected result of Pétion's general policy was to shift the main produce of the republic from sugar to coffee. Sugar had for decades been the staple crop of southern Haiti; but its cultivation requires scrupulous care and expensive machinery. Coffee, on the other hand, grows wild both in the lowlands and at heights of three thousand feet. It is "wild" in the sense that plants spring from seeds dropped by parent trees, without careful planting. When it became obvious that the workers were not to be persuaded to regular work in the cane fields, the landlords broke up the large plantations so necessary to sugar cultivation. Each tenant farmer was almost sure to find coffee trees on his rented plot of land. He would harvest the berries but would do little or nothing to tend and improve the plants, as he did not own them. In French days coffee trees had been pruned, fertilized, grafted; the new Haitian farmer simply let nature take its course. Pétion's careful planning resulted consequently in an entirely unplanned, accidental, and automatic adjustment to new conditions of life.

29. That the landlords did not too vigorously protest this system of care for the workers was due to their familiarity with similar care in slave days.